644 595 562 587 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 595 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sections.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in [291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support [357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

562 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself
584 with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet
[431 beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home
585] with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the
428 women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of
562 the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age.
768 However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so
[177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, térédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.

587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The
[556] wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

428 When the head of a household dies, he leaves an inheritance of varying magnitude. No one touches it until the day of kouré. As soon as the festivities are over, the eldest son summons the head of the family and all his uncles, brothers, and sisters. The partition of the property must be carried out. Theoretically, the whole inheritance, all the women, cattle, and cowries, belongs to the eldest son if he is married [429] or of marriageable age. If he is too young, one of the younger brothers of the deceased must act as his guardian, administer the property, and transfer it to his nephew when he comes of age. Of course, the uncle squanders his ward's property. If the deceased leaves no male heirs, the inheritance devolves to his eldest daughter. If he has no children, /76/ his younger brother, or if there is none, the son of his oldest brother, inherits the property. The oldest brother himself never inherits, except in the case of a naba; in such a case, if there is no other heir, the oldest brother comes into the fortune.

428 Although in theory the oldest son is the absolute master of all his
587 father's property, in reality he must share part of it. If he has younger brothers of marriageable age, he gives them one of his father's wives. Every brother who inherits a wife must shave her head. If she refuses to have this done, it means that she does not want this new husband.
428 If the heir's brothers are too young, he gives them some livestock, cattle, sheep, goats. If the inheritance is sufficient to allow it, the uncles also get their share. No one may force the eldest son to share the property. He may state point blank that he intends to keep everything, but this will cause him difficulties and create enemies, especially if his father has squandered a nephew's fortune. Upon his uncle's death, a nephew defrauded of his father's property reminds his cousin of the matter and requests indemnities, which are usually granted in the form of wives or livestock.

428 The new heir becomes head of the household in his turn and often
592 inhabits his father's soukala; sometimes he builds himself another one. He is now his own master, subject only to the family head, while his unmarried sisters and younger brothers come under his jurisdiction. He has inherited the property, but he has not inherited the power. If his father was a naba and he wishes to succeed him, he must now solicit the position from the higher naba who is empowered to grant it.

596 Such is the family life of the Mossi. To summarize: marked submission to nabas and family heads, marked freedom toward those who are not in a position of authority. The wives live side by side

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
587 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

Joking Between Siblings-in-Law

Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly different strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

Joking Between Sibs

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

Joking Between Age-Sets

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational